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TAGS: PREL SN AF PK

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: SINGAPORE PUBLICLY WELCOMES PRESIDENT OBAMA'S "POSITIVE AND PRAGMATIC" WAY FORWARD

REF: A. STATE 120807

1B. STATE 122731

1C. STATE 123222

1D. SINGAPORE 1149

Classified By: CDA Daniel Shields for reason 1.4(d)

11. (U) The Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued the following press statement late on December 2. (Note: President Obama's West Point speech took place on the morning of December 2 Singapore time. End note.)

BEGIN TEXT OF MFA STATEMENT

Singapore welcomes the United States' continued commitment in Afghanistan that President Obama outlined today. This is a positive and pragmatic way forward.

Singapore continues to support the multinational stabilisation and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. A Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) Weapon Locating Radar and a medical team are now deployed in Oruzgan province and an engineering team in Bamiyan province in support of these efforts. Singapore has also offered to deploy a KC-135 aerial refueling tanker and an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle detachment if these are useful to the multinational efforts. Singapore has also been offering a variety of training programmes for Afghan officials, including healthcare, anti-narcotics control, and water and waste management.

END TEXT OF MFA STATEMENT

12. (C) Comment: Singapore MFA Deputy Secretary Chua Siew San told CDA on December 2 that she expected (Ref D) Singapore would be able to make a clear, public statement of support for President Obama's announcement. The MFA followed up within a few hours by delivering such a statement. Singapore is clearly proud of its contributions to the ISAF effort and is prepared to do more, consistent with its small size and limited manpower and logistical capabilities. The period following President Obama's speech affords an opportunity to underline Singapore's renewed commitment to Afghanistan by finding a way to move forward on Singapore's outstanding offers of a KC-135 aerial refueling tanker and UAV detachment. Singapore also has a great deal of technical expertise that could help civilian reconstruction and development efforts in Afghanistan. End Comment.

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